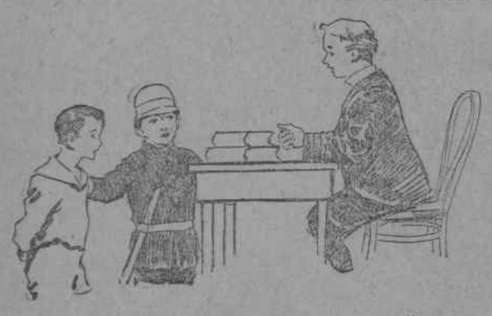
The Presidential Campaign of the Junior Republic.

By WINIFRED BLACK.



A BOY came into the Journal office the other day. He was a thin, awkward little fellow with a solemn peaked face. He said he wanted to go to the Journal's Junior Republic and be a citizen. "I heard about it last night down in Delancey street," he said. "Some of the fellers was telling about it. I thought they was kiddin' me at first, but they said no, they was talking straight. They said you could go up there and learn to be a blacksmith, or a carpenter, or a farmer, or anything you want to. I they said that you could run for something and maybe be a "cop" by and by. ey said it didn't make no difference hether you had a cent of money or not, any place to go, or any folks, 'long as would work and be on the square. I guess they wuz stringing me, wasn't they?"

He said all this in the strangest kind of a strained, husky voice, and he never took breath until he had finished the whole thing. He leaned forward in his chair and laughed, but his big, solemn eyes did not ugh. When I told him that the boys had "stringing" him he grew as white and then he turned red and beick at the knees of his frayed old s.

tell you what I will do," I said. "I oing up to the Republic to-day; they g to have an election up there. I nk they are quite ready for their ens yet, but I will tell them about I'll let you know as soon as I when you can go up. Where rou?"

laughed uneasily.

e said, "the postman don't e I live; I guess I'll come in here and see you."

When he arose to go I saw that he was lame. He noticed my glance of surprise and his face flushed.

"I can work real hard with my hands," he said; "a good deal harder than a boy that ain't lame can. And I can get around awful fast. The boys call me 'Sprinty' down on the docks.

When I told him that his being a cripple would not debar him from citizenship in the Boys' Republic he laughed again and hobbled out. When he got to the door he turned around and put his hand to his shabby old hat in a sort of military salute. He drew himself up very straight and stood there an instant, and then he went away.

In a few minutes I started for the Junior Republic. I went up on the West Shore Road to Haverstraw. It is about an hour and a half out of New York. Then I drove over the mountain and down through a smiling valley and up through a country lane thick with daisies and there I found at the side of the road the Journal Junior Republic.

It lies on a gentle slope between the mountain and a deep valley. There are nearly a hundred acres in the Republic ground; there are three orchards there, two trout streams and a splendid grove of maple, hickory and walnut trees. You drive through an old-fashioned farm gate into an old-fashioned farmyard, and up to an old-fashioned stone farm house with a porch and dormer windows, and a well with a bucket and chain just outside the door.

This old-fashioned farm house is at present the capitol of the Junior Republic. There was a notice on the bulletin board outside the capitol and a crowd of boys were sitting down on the edge of the porch talking about that notice.

"It's goin' to be in a few minutes from now," said a red-haired boy to a black-haired boy, "and yer jest got to make up your mind. Yer can't be changin' from one party to another again. First we'll make our constitution all right and then we'll elect the president and the other fellers. And I tell you boys now, and you better listen to what I tell you, that president's got to have three weeks in his term anyway. He wont know anything before the second week, and anyhow you're always say that if there is five hundred boys and the president has three weeks to be president that there is only a few that will get a chance. Well, that's the way it ought to be. That's the way it is in the United States. Every feller on earth can't be President; it's only the smartest ones. And you ain't picking out a president so's to give him a chance, you're picking out a feller that'll give the Republic a chance."

I went alone out to the well curb, and in the shadow of it I saw two boys sitting and discussing the man who was to run for Judge. Up at the barn there were three boys chewing straw. They were talking about the proper amount to be paid to the Chief of Police as a salary.

"They have been at work all day," said Mr. Lerch, the director of manual training, "and they knocked off a little early now to get ready for the convention. I guess it has been pretty hard for them to keep their minds on their work to-day. Have you seen the gardens? They are raising all their own vegetables, and it's funny to see some of those boys when the vegetables really begin to look like something they have seen before. Most of them have never been out of the city in their lives, and I think they had the idea that potatoes were made somewhere, like boxes. We have all our own milk, you know, most of the boys on the place are crazy to learn to milk."

A tall boy came running up to us with his face fairly blazing with excitement.

"Gee whiz!" he said, "them hens is reg'ler peaches. They are settin' on their nests just as if they had growed there, and they get mad as Dutchmen if you try to peek under them to see if there are any eggs yet."

Then two of the citizens had to tell me about a nest of squirrels they had found in the roof of the Capitol, and one of them had caught a bird with a broken leg, and one of them knew where there were three meadow larks' nests, and one of them had learned how to make a whistle out of a willow stick, and all of them had seen fireflies, and there was much news and great excitement. But through all the boys' talk, there ran the ever-present subject of the convention.

There was a sudden beat of a drum, and every boy started, pell mell, for the Capitol. The room where the convention was held was a low-ceilinged, old-fashioned parlor. The boys ranged themselves in rows along the walls, one of them called the meeting to order, and the Committee on the Constitution rose and read what that committee called a "pramble." Here it is:

"Whereas, We, a number of boys who want a chance to live free and independent and earn a living as free men do, have taken courage to copy the example of the men who started the American Republic, and

"Whereas, We have come into the country to found a new republic of our own, and

"Whereas, We, the citizens of this republic, want every boy that don't know where to go to know that this is a place where he can get a chance, and

"Whereas, A certain friendly power has helped us to get our republic to going, we name our republic and hereby say that it is named the Journal Junior Republic, and

"Whereas, We are running our republic under the laws of the United States only where the laws have to be changed a little on account of our being boys and having a small Republic, the following shall be declared to be our laws:"

This "pramble" was unanimously adopted. The laws which follow were exactly the same as the United States laws, except that the Senators and the members of Congress serve much shorter terms. When the constitution had been adopted it was announced that the hour for voting had arrived, and a marshal and two deputies were sworn in to preserve the peace at the polls. The marshal was a young man of fourteen with a face full of grim determination, and he and his deputies paraded from place to place watching vainly for some disturbance to quell. There was none. In half an hour after the polls had been declared open the votes were counted, and the election clerk went out on the porch and read the returns amid a dead and breathless silence: President, John Martin; Sheriff, Thomas Brown; Judge, Philip Miller; Prosecuting attorney, William Bradley; Treasurer, Emil Becker; County Clerk, Charles Monsell; Postmaster, Alex. Blinn.

When he had reached the end of the ticket there was a perfect war whoop, and the candidates and the men who had elected them joined hands and circled around the place in perfect ecstasy.

The Sheriff stood on his head and the Judge and the Postmaster did a cake walk.

"Speech! Speech!" called the red-haired boy.

"Speech!" echoed the citizens in a chorus, and they seized the President and bore him to the parade ground, and they lit a bonfire, and they boosted the President into a tree, and then they all stood around and shouted "Speech!" until the President stood in the tree and waved his hand for silence.

He was very pale, and his voice shook a little.

"Fellow-citizens," he said, "I thank you. I am proud to be here to-night. I will try to be a good President. I will try my best to do what I can to make our great and glorious republic a success. Thanking you one and all for your kind attention"——

There was nothing grotesque in the speech as it was spoken, out there in the Summer twilight.

The boy was dead in earnest, and the boys who cheered him were as serious as ever men were serious.

There were more speeches. The Judge—a grave, honest-faced young man, spoke, and the Prosecuting Attorney spoke—a good speech it was, too, full of fire and honest purpose, and the Sheriff spoke, and the Postmaster spoke, and the boys cheered and sang, and some one started "Marching Through Georgia," and when the citizens went to bed they went to marching time, with heads held high and feet that trod to martial measure.

In the morning there was court. The criminal was a boy, who had been arrested for misbehavior at table. He sat miserably in the docks, and his attorney tried in vain to comfort him.

"All you can do for me," said the prisoner desperately, "is to git me off—that's all I want—to git me off. I don't want to be no convict."

But his attorney could not "git him off."

There were witnesses, solemn, determined witnesses, who could not be shaken in their evidence for all the efforts of the counsel is trying to confuse witnesses. We will admit that witnesses do not know what time it was"——

"I do," piped a flaxen haired witness, who was tying a string around his fingers and horrifying himself with the results; "I do."

"Order in court!" said the Judge, and the flaxen haired witness nearly sunk through the floor when he realized that he had spoken out of order.

The whole trial was dignified and sensible, and the citizens showed an amazing intelligence.

It was funny at first, and then it was pathetic—the serious earnestness of the whole affair.

"I find," said the Judge, "that the prisoner is guilty of disorderly conduct. As it is his first offence, I shall make the sentence light. One hour in jail."

"The court is adjourned," said the clerk.

The prisoner went to jail.

It is a sturdy little jail, that was once a corn crib, but it has iron bars now, and three cells. The prisoner was much downcast, but his attorney told him to think what would have happened if he had not prevailed upon the Judge for a light sentence.

"Light sentence!" said the prisoner. "Five minutes will do the trick. I wanted to run for the Senate, and now I can't, 'cause I've served a term."

Any imprisonment disbars a citizen from citizenship for three weeks in the republic.

There was a good deal of discussion over that law. Some of the citizens believed that nothing short of a day and night sentence ought to count, but the majority voted for "any term in jail," and that settled it.

"We've got to be strict," said the Judge, apologetically. "It aint so much for now. We get along all right. But we're taking ten new citizens a week now, and sometimes twenty, and by July we'll have 200 or 300 here, maybe, and they wont all understand things the way we do, and we've got to have strict laws to keep things going right."

There was a good deal of anxiety about a scale of wage at first. Some of the citizens seemed to think that the Government ought to decide what wages should be. But it was decided that pay for Government labor should be ten cents an hour, and that each employer should settle with his own employes about wages.

There are two hotels in the republic, both kept by the boys. The Government sells the contract and the boys hire help and charge board.

The finest hotel charges twenty cents for board and the cheapest charges ten cents.

The working hours at government works are from 7 o'clock to noon. There is court from 1 till 2, and there is drill at 5:30.

Many of the citizens work ten and twelve hours a day. They do this to make extra money for special purposes. A citizen who works the regular hours can earn enough to pay his living expenses and have some money over for a bank account. No one is forced to work.

A citizen can be as idle as he pleases. He can play ball all day if he wants to—but when night comes, he may find some hotel keeper charitable enough to give him lodging for nothing, and he may not. The chances are that he will not.

There are taxes which support a hospital fund. A boy who is too sick to work is well cared for—but it doesn't pay to play sick at the Republic.

There's too much fun going on, and too much money to be made, by good, hard work.

There's a store at the Republic.

One of the citizens keeps a general store. He buys his goods on credit from the Government, and pays up at regular times. If he can not pay, he is sold out.

There will be half a dozen shops there when the Summer rush comes in a few weeks.

In all this busy, absorbed little world there are just three grown persons.

One of these grown persons is Mr. Lerch.

Mr. Lerch would be called a superintendent anywhere else. There is no use for such a title in the Republic. Mr. Lerch is there, as an adviser, and as a representative of the "friendly Powers," of whom the citizens speak in their constitution.

The cook is teaching the young cooks just how to do things, and they are learning fast. In a week or two they will handle all the cooking themselves, and before the Summer is over they will know almost enough to hire out as cooks.

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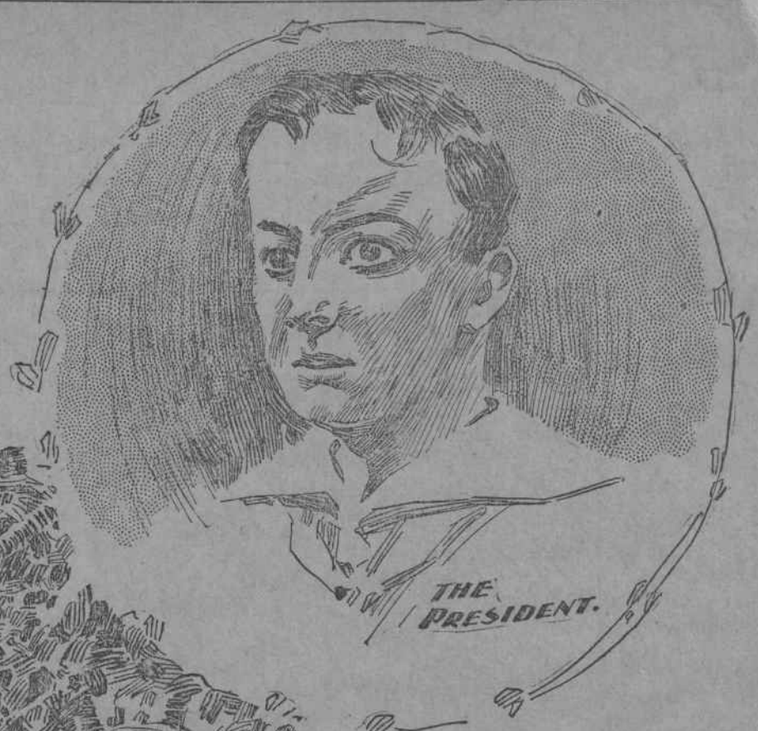

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PREAMBLE OF THE BOYS' CONSTITUTION.

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"Whereas, We have come into the country to found a new republic of our own, and

"Whereas, We, the citizens of this republic, want everybody that don't know where to go to know that this is a place where he can get a chance, and

"Whereas, A certain friendly paper has helped us to get our republic to going, we name our republic and hereby say that it is named the Journal Junior Republic, and

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